

DDSD Post-Secondary Education, Life Long Learning and Specialized Training Initiatives

Background:

DAIL's Developmental Disabilities Service Division's (DDSD) Post-Secondary Education Initiative (PSEI) promotes college education and industry based career training for transition-age youth with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities (DD/ID) and promotes access to lifelong learning for adults with DD/ID.

Partnering organizations provide one of the following PSE options:

- a) Services for youth up to age 26 to attend college and obtain a 2-year degree of higher learning.
- b) Services to access both adult learning and teaching opportunities
- c) Services for specialized industry-based training programs for students in their last year of high school

Consortium:

In 2013, DDSD and the organizations became a consortium to unify missions and service commonalities. This created an integrated approach to high schools, families, and funders. The sharing of resources and knowledge and cross mentoring between programs has served to elevate the success and stability for each program. The Consortium approach streamlines public education about the differences and similarities between programs, making it easier for students, families, and schools to select the best fit. The Consortium works on behalf of each other and by doing so has created a statewide menu of PSE service options.

Consortium Program Members are:

- 1) **Succeed Program** at Howard Center was the first PSE program and was developed entirely through the efforts and vision of the Howard Center. Succeed is the only DDS program to offer a residential component. This is a 2-year certificate program for a degree of higher learning. Succeed also supports some students in 4-year degrees.
- 2) **Think College @ UVM-CDCI** is a grant that introduced the fidelity of the National Think College model to Vermont and is in its last year of federal grant funding. CDCI is in the process of researching continuance of the program after the grant ends. This is a 2-year certificate program for a degree of higher learning.
- 3) **College Steps Program, Inc.** formed to collaborate with TC to close service and funding gaps at the Johnson State College program. CSP has since collaborated with DDS agencies to implement programs Castleton State College, Southern Vermont College, and Lyndon State College. This is a 2-year certificate program for a degree of higher learning.

4) **Project Search Vermont** provides business-located training during the last year of high school to increase employability via technical training in various industries such as health. 90% of students graduate with a job.

5) **Global Campuses Foundation** has contracted with several DDS agencies since 2000 to facilitate adult and lifelong learning for DDS consumers with GCF locating learning venues at Springfield College and Community Colleges. The GCF model mentors students in self-guided inquiry stemming from their interests and student eventually teaches others.

6) **DDS agencies** collaborating on behalf of their clients include LMHS, RMHS, UCS, Families First, HCRS, NCSS, CCS, and NKHS. Each contracts for direct campus based supports at a fully established campus based program.

DDSD PSEI:

In FY 2014, grant awards went to several independent non-profits to expand PSE and Adult Learning. In addition, the designated agencies that support youth at their local colleges were provided an allocation to close gaps in individualized support budgets consumers use to pay for their direct services while at college.

The Agency of Education (AOE) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) funded an Implementation Task Force to design and guide Vermont's first Project Search, a vocational training program for high school seniors with developmental disabilities. The result of this work is a Project Search established between The Howard Center, Chittenden County School Districts, and a Burlington business. This initiative is funded by DDSD, DVR, AOE, and the School Districts, with the bulk of funding coming from school districts.

In sum, DAIL has worked to support youth to advance through college or training by developing a full statewide PSEI that will augment and support the direct services implemented over the past seven years. It is our goal to help any transition-age youth who, with individualized college supports, is able to succeed in a post-secondary setting or training program and by doing so graduate with meaningful employment opportunities.

*Jennie Masterson 6/10/14
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